

St. Philomena, Stonelick, Ohio
 City O. December 27 1871

Most Rev. Bishop
 in the course of the present
 year 7 solemnized 7 marriages,
 Baptized 23 Children, (four
 more will be presented very soon
 to receive the same grace...
 in the month of February by the
 hands of Rev. Father Jacob
 O.S.A. many men, women
 children received absolution and
 Communion. beside at Easter time
 and on few Sundays and holy
 days I had kneeling for Confession
 and Communion; among them
 many very young
 in the 2 last years I had only
 1 adult dead; they receive
 the Sacraments. the weather the
 congregation was very good

Chicago, received an offer from Rev. Father
 with the Bishop's permission, January, and
 the sermon that you gave on the
 dedication of the Church was very
 much approved by the Catholics
 and the Americans.
 last Christmas I read my three
 masses for the 40th
 Anniversary, preached a good
 sermon on the subject of
 the feast to a very much
 crowded audience.
 the congregation of St. Philomena
 count now 65 Catholic
 families, at least.
 this year I received for
 my salary \$300. nota.
 they were benches made on
 the gallery and windows
 frosted; and from the Catholic
 ladies I received a rich cope
 and a veil for the benediction altar cloth.

As Navarron =
 19th Dec. 1871

Last summer during the summer
 weeks, I taught the Catechism
 to my children, but they were
 few in number and very
 young. I delayed their first
 Communion to next year.
 the weather is very much changing
 this winter at Stonelick.
 hard frost, thaw and kind of
 warm weather succeed one
 to another so rapidly.
 I wish to your grace and
 your good Brother E. long
 and happy years, and in the
 next a glorious Crown in Coelo.
 Most Rev. Humble etc.

Louis Navarron

The letters of Father Navarron (Navarron) to the Archbishop form an important source of information on the early days of the parish at St. Philomena.

to the Archbishop, he praised the prelate's remarks as follows: "...the sermon that you gave on the dedication of the Church was very much approved by the Catholics and the Americans." (The underline was Father Navarron's.)

While both the native and the immigrant Catholics considered themselves very much American in every respect, that view was not shared by American anti-Catholics on the one hand, and the European clergy on the other. Strange bedfellows, indeed!

Already the growth of the parish was pushing at the capacity of the new church. Father Navarron reported: "Last Christmas I...preached a good sermon on the feast to a very much crowded audience. The congregation of St. Philomena count now 65 Catholic families, at least."

"This year I received for my salary \$300. Nota. They were benches made for the gallery and windows frosted, and from the Catholic ladies I received a rich cape for the benediction, altar cloths, etc."

As is typical, even today, of those not native to the Ohio Valley, the vagaries of the weather are a source of amazement. Father Navarron commented: "The weather is very much changing this winter at Stonelick. Hard frost, thaw, and kind of warm weather succeed one to another so rapidly."

The letter concludes, in a mixture of English, Latin and French:
 "I wish to your Grace, and to your Good Brother, E. long and happy years, and in the next a glorious Crown in Coelo.

Votre tres humble, etc.
 Louis Navarron"

In 1880 the pastorship of Father Navarron ended, after 29 years. He was, by far, the longest tenured of all the pastors in the history of the parish. He was popular with the congregation and

with the Protestant community as well, those he considered "the Americans." He was a friend of the colorful frontier minister, Rev. Hezekiah Hill, even though they had long and unresolved theological differences of opinion.

In 1881, the "History and Biographical Cyclopedia of Butler County, Ohio" described him as a "person of medium height, with dark eyes and hair. In his intercourse with those who are not members of his church, he is affable and courteous, and has won the respect of all who know him for his devotion to the church of his adoption."

Father Schelhammer succeeded Father Navarron. In 1883, he was replaced by Father Wiederhold, who, in 1885, was succeeded by Father Hctor.

In but two years, in 1887, Father Cunningham was assigned to St. Philomena and served for six years as pastor.

Except for continued growth, these were relatively uneventful years in the life of the parish. But growth there was, and once again, the church was shoulder-to-shoulder with the faithful. Sunday Masses were standing room only, and on the major feast days, the congregation overflowed the building.

Such was the situation inherited by young Father Gallagher who assumed the pastorship in 1903.